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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Here it is, Halloween night in a few hours. The neighborhood ghosts and goblins will be making their way to houses, hoping for treats rather than invoking a few choice tricks. If you've never been to Salem, Massachusetts, it may be difficult for you to truly understand this entertaining little "holiday". Yes, Salem, the home of witchcraft in America. A great place to visit, especially if you can manage it on Halloween night.

In our neighborhood, we get lots of trick o' treaters, but usually a few less when the holiday falls on a weekend. Must be a lot of Halloween parties to go to on a weekend rather than a school night. I'm not sure, but it always seems to work out that away around here. While I watch the dogs, my wife gets to see all of the costumes adorned by the kids, and pass out a variety of treats. Every once in awhile, I'll venture a look out the window and catch a glimpse. A number of my neighbors' houses are fully decorated with scenes of horror and lights - a great scene.

All in all, it's a fun holiday for everyone involved, unless you don't like kids or could be bothered to answer the door to a child's "Trick or Treat!" Yes, we have a couple of Halloween Scrooges in the neighborhood, leaving the house darkened so no one will approach their doors. Guess they were never allowed to go out trick o' treating when they were kids!

Anyway, please be careful Saturday night if you're out and about after dark. There will be kids everywhere, and they may not be paying attention to drivers! Now, pass me another Reese's!!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, another week has come and gone and, as Harry Chapin wrote in a song, all the changes keep on changing.

I KNOW I'm getting old now. More and more I'm finding that I agree with

the old adage that change is change for the worse. For instance, the changes in the medical industry have us really roped and hogtied these days. I mean, the health care industry is completely different than what it used to be... there are tests and procedures and drugs that there never were before, and the cost is simply astronomical... because it CAN be.

Look at it this way: It used to be that you'd go to the doctor, sit in the waiting room for half an hour while he or she saw other patients, then got into the examination room and you were his only patient. He'd charge you a couple of bucks because, heck, he worked out of his parlor, or he'd long since paid off the mortgage on the building and all he really needed to pay for business-wise was the cotton balls and alcohol and penicillin and iodine, and maybe a new glass syringe and hypodermic needles and of course old magazines for the waiting room. (I always wondered where doctors bought 18 month old magazines [chuckle])

Then came the change. Doctors were now corporations. The have to pay rent on these luxury business suites, pay for purchasing and maintaining the latest whiz-bang equipment, pay a whole staff of office and computer people, and last but certainly not least, pay those huge premiums on malpractice insurance. Then there's the cost of becoming a doctor in the first place. Medical school costs have become outrageous.

And through it all, we the public paid little heed to it, since we had insurance that was going to pick up the tab. Sure, insurance costs money, but our employer paid that. It was part of our compensation. So costs rose and the insurance companies picked up the tab. Drug companies got into the act, spending what they had to to develop new drugs, knowing they could pass on the costs plus a nice little profit, and we'd pay it... or let our insurance company pay it.

So costs rose and we contented ourselves with the idea that we could go to a doctor anytime we wanted and not have to worry about affording it, that But we forgot the golden rule; That NOTHING is free. There's a price to be paid for everything. We thought it would be alright because that's what insurance was for. We also forgot that INSURANCE isn't free. We grew accustomed to it. Now we feel entitled to health care; all the doctor's visits we want along with all the expensive tests and therapies. And we feel entitled to have someone else pay for it.

And to be honest, I believe that everyone should have access to quality health care. I think it should be affordable, and the snakes on the caduceus should, like Lady Justice, be blind. But I also believe that there's a line we should observe. There are things that just shouldn't be considered 'health care'. Elective surgeries like most cosmetic procedures, for instance.

The problem is, as I see it, that we haven't dug down to the root of the problem yet. We're concentrating on what it costs US. The real problem goes much deeper than that. Today's health care is a completely different animal than it used to be. But even though it's different world health care-wise, we are still trying to pay for it the same way we always have. It's just not going to work.

Okay, enough about health care. I have one political question not related to health care debate, and I'm not going to answer my own question this time either. So here it is:

Why is it that it's taken someone in this administration almost ten

months to show some signs of... ummm... testicular fortitude... and why is it that, when someone finally DOES, IT'S HILLARY!?

Yes, Hillary gave as good as she got in Pakistan this week. Key phrases like "You don't HAVE to take our money" and "It's your country and you can do what you want... but _I_ wouldn't do it..." endeared her to me like nothing else has. And let's face it, where friendship in the face of adversity is concerned, Pakistan may well be one of those countries that ends up being... how did she put it about Bill?... A hard dog to keep on the porch. [grin]

Well, that's it for this week. Tune again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Video Game Footage Leaked!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""   Gamers: Get "Wink" Glasses!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Leaked Video Game Footage Shows Terrorist Attack

Footage leaked from "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2" reveals that players of the upcoming video game can shoot innocent civilians in an airport in a realistic rendering of a terrorist attack.

The game, which has an "M" rating for mature audiences, comes out next month in what its publisher hopes may be the most lucrative launch in the history of entertainment, not just for games but counting music and movies too.

In a statement, game publisher Activision Blizzard Inc. said Wednesday the footage was taken illegally and is not representative of the game's overall experience. Instead, the game is designed to evoke the "atrocities of terrorism," Activision's public-relations agency said in an e-mailed statement.

The game follows players as they "face off against a terrorist threat dedicated to bringing the world to the brink of collapse," the company said. This includes a plot line in which the player infiltrates a Russian villain's inner circle to defeat him. Presumably the airport

attack is one of the scenes in which the player acts as part of the villain’s group.

Gamers are warned that the scene may be disturbing, and they can choose not to play through the part. It’s unlikely, though, that most gamers will heed the warning, since it means skipping part of the game’s intricate story.

Infinity Ward, the game’s developer, hasn’t shied away from disturbing imagery in the past. "Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare" begins with a character being driven through an occupied city, dragged out of the car, tied to a pole and then executed - all from the victim’s point of view.

But what’s different in the upcoming game is that people can play from a terrorist’s perspective, just as they can play criminal in the "Grand Theft Auto" titles.

New Japanese Glasses Bring Tears to the Eyes

The Japanese eyewear company behind Sarah Palin’s designer glasses has come up with a high-tech solution for obsessive video-gamers and bookworms whose eyes dry out from lack of blinking.

Masunaga Optical Manufacturing Co. Ltd. said Tuesday its "Wink Glasses" - retailing for 40,000 yen (430 dollars) - were an answer to the ocular dehydration caused for instance by prolonged computer use.

When a sensor detects that the wearer has not blinked for more than five seconds, the glasses "fog up" by gradually making a liquid crystal display over one eye turn opaque.

A simple blink clears the lens again.

Masunaga, based in the central Japanese city of Fukui, has enjoyed a boost in sales since Palin burst to international prominence last year as the Republicans’ vice presidential pick in the United States.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Internet Set for Change with Non-English Addresses

The Internet is set to undergo one of the biggest changes in its four-decade history with the expected approval this week of international domain names - or addresses - that can be written in languages other than English, an official said Monday.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN - the non-profit group that oversees domain names - is holding a meeting this week in Seoul. Domain names are the monikers behind every Web site, e-mail address and Twitter post, such as ".com" and other suffixes.

One of the key issues to be taken up by ICANN's board at this week's gathering is whether to allow for the first time entire Internet addresses to be in scripts that are not based on Latin letters. That could potentially open up the Web to more people around the world as addresses could be in characters as diverse as Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Greek, Hindi and Cyrillic - in which Russian is written.

"This is the biggest change technically to the Internet since it was invented 40 years ago," Peter Dengate Thrush, chairman of the ICANN board, told reporters, calling it a "fantastically complicated technical feature." He said he expects the board to grant approval on Friday, the conference's final day.

The Internet's roots are traced to experiments at a U.S. university in 1969 but it wasn't until the early 1990s that its use began expanding beyond academia and research institutions to the public.

Rod Beckstrom, ICANN's new president and CEO, said that if the change is approved, ICANN would begin accepting applications for non-English domain names and that the first entries into the system would likely come sometime in mid 2010.

Enabling the change, Thrush said, is the creation of a translation system that allows multiple scripts to be converted to the right address.

"We're confident that it works because we've been testing it now for a couple of years," he said. "And so we're really ready to start rolling it out."

Of the 1.6 billion Internet users worldwide, Beckstrom - a former chief of U.S. cybersecurity - said that more than half use languages that have scripts based on alphabets other than Latin.

"So this change is very much necessary for not only half the world's Internet users today, but more than half of probably the future users as the use of the Internet continues to spread," he said.

Beckstrom, in earlier remarks to conference participants, recalled that many people had said just three to five years ago that using non-Latin scripts for domain names would be impossible to achieve.

"But you the community and the policy groups and staff and board have worked through them, which is absolutely incredible," he said.

ICANN is headquartered in the United States in Marina del Rey, California.

Hebrew, Hindi, Other Scripts Get Web Address Nod

The nonprofit body that oversees Internet addresses approved Friday the use of Hebrew, Hindi, Korean and other scripts not based on Latin characters in a decision that could make the Web dramatically more inclusive.

The board of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers - or ICANN - voted to allow such scripts in so-called domain names at the conclusion of a weeklong meeting in Seoul, South Korea’s capital.

The decision by the board’s 15 voting members was unopposed and welcomed by applause and a standing ovation. It followed years of debate and testing.

The result clears the way for governments or their designees to submit requests for specific names, likely beginning Nov. 16. Internet users could start seeing them in use early next year, particularly in Arabic, Chinese and other scripts in which demand has been among the highest, ICANN officials say.

"This represents one small step for ICANN, but one big step for half of mankind who use non-Latin scripts, such as those in Korea, China and the Arabic speaking world as well as across Asia, Africa, and the rest of the world," Rod Beckstrom, ICANN’s CEO, said ahead of the vote.

Domain names - the Internet addresses that end in ".com" and other suffixes - are the key monikers behind every Web site, e-mail address and Twitter post.

Since their creation in the 1980s, domain names have been limited to the 26 characters in the Latin alphabet used in English - A-Z - as well as 10 numerals and the hyphen. Technical tricks have been used to allow portions of the Internet address to use other scripts, but until now, the suffix had to use those 37 characters.

That has meant Internet users with little or no knowledge of English might still have to type in Latin characters to access Web pages in Chinese or Arabic. Although search engines can sometimes help users reach those sites, companies still need to include Latin characters on billboards and other advertisements.

Now, ICANN is allowing those same technical tricks to apply to the suffix as well, allowing the Internet to be truly multilingual.

Many of the estimated 1.5 billion people online use languages such as Chinese, Thai, Arabic and Japanese, which have writing systems entirely different from English, French, German, Indonesian, Swahili and others that use Latin characters.

"This is absolutely delightful news," said Edward Yu, CEO of Analysys International, an Internet research and consulting firm in Beijing.

The Internet would become more accessible to users with lower incomes and education, said Yu, who was speaking before the widely expected decision.

Countries can only request one suffix for each of their official languages, and the suffix must somehow reflect the name of the country or its abbreviation.

Non-Latin versions of ".com" and ".org" won’t be permitted for at least a few more years as ICANN considers broader policy questions such as whether the incumbent operator of ".com" should automatically get a Chinese version, or whether that more properly goes to China, as its government insists.

ICANN also is initially prohibiting Latin suffixes that go beyond the 37

already-permitted characters. That means suffixes won’t be able to include tildes, accent marks and other special characters.

And software developers still have to make sure their applications work with the non-Latin scripts. Major Web browsers already support them, but not all e-mail programs do.

In China, Guo Liang, a researcher who studies Internet use for the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the government’s top think tank, questioned whether all Chinese will embrace the new domains.

Although the move will reflect linguistic and cultural diversity, Guo said, "for some users it might even be easier to type domains in Latin alphabets than Chinese characters."

China has already set up its own ".com" in Chinese within its borders, using techniques that aren’t compatible with Internet systems around the world.

Most Chinese and Japanese computer users write characters in their native scripts by typing phonetic versions on a standard English keyboard.

China is among a handful of countries that has pushed hardest for official non-Latin suffixes and could be one of the first to make one available, said Tina Dam, the ICANN senior director for internationalized domain names. The other countries, she said, are Russia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

About 50 such names are likely to be approved in the first few years.

The Internet’s roots are traced to experiments at U.S. universities in 1969 but it wasn’t until the early 1990s that its use began expanding beyond academia and research institutions to the public.

The U.S. government, which funded much of the Internet’s early development, selected ICANN in 1998 to oversee policies on domain names. ICANN, which has headquarters in the United States in Marina del Rey, California, was set up as a nonprofit with board members from around the world.

Beckstrom said Friday’s approval is not simply aimed at enhancing convenience for Internet users using different scripts.

"It’s also an issue of pride of people and their own culture and their own language, and a recognition that the Internet belongs to everyone," he told The Associated Press in an interview. "It’s a shared resource. So I think it’s a really exciting step for all of us."

How Will New Internet Domain Names Change the Web?

Finally, the World Wide Web will live up to its name. The decision by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) that Web sites written in Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and other non-ASCII character sets will be able to have their Internet domain names displayed in their own languages truly makes the Web a global worldwide network. For the past 40 years (the Internet turned 40 this week) the Internet and the Web have been the exclusive domain of English language addresses. For non-English

speaking countries it has been the real world equivalent to forcing them to use English language stationary.

No longer will entire countries be forced to use Latin-based characters and their Web addresses and e-mail addresses will now be as recognizable as their telephone book. The move is being heralded by ICANN as the biggest technical change to the Internet since its birth.

For that reason many around the world are cheering the move as a way of opening up Internet access to more people.

"The net result will be an expansion of the Internet in terms of resources and users. Small local businesses are likely to benefit as their Internet and e-mail address can now be in their own local language," according to a writer for Asia Times Online.

The Korea Herald pointedly quoted ICANN CEO Rod Beckstrom as saying the new Internet names are "very important not only for more than half of the current [Internet] users but also for half of the Internet users to come."

More than 50 percent of the current total of 1.6 billion Internet users speak languages that aren't Latin-based, according to widely used estimates.

Yet on the other hand, the new names carry risks for new security concerns and general user confusion. Some fear the Web might grow increasingly fragmented into areas easily accessible only to those conversant in local languages.

There are certainly lots of languages in the world, a problem mythologized in the Biblical tale of the fall of the Tower of Babel, in which God punished people by scattering them across the face of the Earth and splitting the human language into many different tongues.

Google, the world's leading search engine, now does support searches conducted with the use of Korean and Arabic character sets, for instance.

But ICANN's actions, although well intended, also raise nuts-and-bolts questions that are yet to be answered.

How will you be able to type the domain names of international Web sites when your keyboard doesn't support their character sets?

It would be logistically just about impossible for a PC maker to supply a keyboard supporting the Western "ABC" alphabet, along with the disparate character sets used in all of these tongues, for example: Japanese, Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Cyrillic, and the Central and European languages.

It's true that you can download fonts used in these languages, along with "virtual keyboard layouts" that spare you the need to buy separate physical keyboards.

But things can get very dicey here. For instance, Russian keyboards are reportedly slightly different on Windows and Mac PCs.

And to handle the virtual keyboards with much efficiency, you need to put special stickers on your keys. Just how many virtual keyboards and sets of stickers is anyone supposed to have on hand in the house or office?

It looks as though we could see the development of a whole new class of Web domains that most people won't be able to get to easily -- even though they might be able to find those Web sites with a search engine.

Certainly language translation services and technology may be the biggest winners with today's news. I predict both will flourish along with an international land grab for variations of the word "sex" dot-com.

Icahn Resigns from Yahoo's Board on Friendly Terms

Activist investor Carl Icahn has decided his work is done at Yahoo Inc. after muscling his way on to the slumping Internet company's board nearly 15 months ago.

In a resignation letter Friday, Icahn said he felt like it was time to leave Yahoo so he could spend more time on his investments in other companies.

"I don't believe that it is necessary at this time to have an activist on the board of Yahoo and currently my attention is focused on other matters," Icahn wrote.

Icahn, an outspoken billionaire, spent several months last year denigrating Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang and the rest of the company's board after Yahoo turned down an opportunity to sell to Microsoft Corp. for $47.5 billion, or $33 per share.

That snub still looks like an expensive mistake, with Yahoo shares closing Friday at $17.22.

Icahn struck a truce with Yahoo to get on the board in August 2008 and he is apparently leaving on an amicable note.

In his letter, Icahn praised Yahoo's current chief executive, Carol Bartz, saying she is "doing a great job." Bartz replaced Yang as CEO nine months ago.

Icahn also applauded Yahoo's decision three months ago to hire Microsoft to provide its search results in the United States for the next decade. It's a partnership that Icahn tried to bring together while he was still seeking to get Yang fired. The proposed alliance between Yahoo and Microsoft still requires regulatory approval.

Yahoo, which is based in Sunnyvale, also had kind words for Icahn, saying it is "grateful for his active role in shaping the future" of the company.

A Yahoo spokeswoman said there are no immediate plans to fill Icahn's seat on the board. Another director, Maggie Wilderotter, plans to step aside at the end of the year.

After Wilderotter's departure, Yahoo will be left with 10 directors, including Yang. Two of other directors, John Chapple and Frank Biondi, joined the board as Icahn's allies.

Icahn remains one of Yahoo's largest shareholders with a 4.5 percent stake that is currently worth slightly more than $1 billion. He and his

investment affiliates spent $1.8 billion accumulating a 5.5 percent stake last year, but whittled the holdings two months ago by selling 12.7 million shares.

His resignation letter gave no indication whether he plans to sell more of his Yahoo stock now that he has left the board.

Yahoo’s fortunes have been sliding for the past three years as Google Inc. widened its lead in Internet’s lucrative search market and people began spending more time at other popular online hangouts such as Facebook.

Earlier this week, the company announced that its third-quarter earnings more than tripled as cost cutting helped to offset a 12 percent decline in revenue. The revenue erosion wasn’t quite as bad as earlier this year, raising hopes that the company will fare better as the U.S. economy pulls out of its worst recession in 70 years.

National Data-breach Law Would Help Fight Cybercrime

A U.S. law that would require businesses to report data breaches to potential victims could help law enforcement agencies fight the growth of cybercrime, a U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation official said Wednesday.

If U.S. businesses were required to share information about their data breaches, law enforcement agencies could link those attacks to others and potentially stop similar attacks at other organizations, said Jeffrey Troy, chief of the FBI’s Cyber Criminal Section.

A data-breach notification bill "would help us tremendously, particularly in terms of efficiency in conducting investigations," Troy said during a cybersecurity discussion in Washington, D.C.

Companies need to think beyond their walls when dealing with cybersecurity issues, Troy said. "They have to recognize that the Internet has become a global platform for commerce," he said. "The people that are stealing information from you ... are going after the money."

Attacks used against one company will likely be used against other organizations, Troy said. "We’re really looking forward to getting all this data," he said.

Some members of Congress have pushed for several years to pass data breach notification bills, without success. Although about 45 states have passed their own data-breach notification bills, Congress has yet to pass a federal law.

Data-breach notification will be part of a comprehensive cybersecurity bill that the Senate Judiciary Committee will try to move to the Senate floor this year, said Lydia Griggsby, chief counsel for privacy and information policy at the committee. The Personal Data Privacy and Security Act, sponsored by Senator Patrick Leahy, a Vermont Democrat, would also limit how data brokers can use personal information and would establish data security rules for interstate businesses that collect personal data.

Leahy, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, will hold hearings on the bill later this year, Griggsby said.

A national data-breach notification law is a top legislative priority for cybersecurity products vendor Symantec, said David Thompson, the company's CIO. It's difficult for companies to comply with 45 different state laws, he said.

UK Threatens Web Access Block in Piracy Fight

Britain is to push ahead with a law to clamp down on illegal file sharing, that would start with a series of warning letters and could result in repeat offenders losing their Internet connection.

The proposals, which were set out by Business Secretary Peter Mandelson, have followed a high-profile campaign from artists such as Lily Allen and James Blunt, and follow France's move to ban illegal peer-to-peer sharers for up to a year.

The rules could disappoint some of the artists and executives who have campaigned for the law, however, as the government does not plan to introduce the disconnection element of the law for at least a year, once the bill has passed.

Under the British proposals, the new law could be passed by April and rights holders such as music companies and Internet service providers would work together for over a year to send letters to those who are uploading illegal content.

The government hopes that the warning letters will prompt many to curb their activity but after that time, if the rate of illegal downloading has not significantly declined, the government could then introduce technical measures such as slowing broadband speeds and eventual suspension.

"It must become clear that the days of consequence-free widespread online infringement are over," Mandelson told a cabinet (correct spelling) creative industries conference. "Technical measures will be a last resort and I have no expectation of mass suspensions."

Mandelson told reporters the government had not caved in to the music and film lobby and said they were simply establishing a framework of law.

"It's not lawful to thieve other people's creative work, what we're doing is creating new measures that will bring the law up to date, make it enforceable and clearly understood, so we can touch the first base which is to educate people.

"Most people don't think it is illegal, most people think it is a victimless practice that everyone does and why shouldn't they?"

The debate over how to counter illegal file sharing has raged in Britain for the last 18 months, with rights holders and media groups calling on Internet service providers (ISPs) to intervene and disconnect repeat offenders.

The government has released letters of support from media executives,

such as Sony Music and Time Warner, music managers and artists, such as Elton John and Noel Gallagher.

However, two of the largest ISPs, BT and Carphone Warehouse , have so far objected to their new role as policemen of the Web and are likely to continue to object.

Mandelson said the new law would be similar to the rules passed recently in France, but said they had not yet agreed on how long any suspension would last.

"I was shocked to learn that only one of every 20 tracks downloaded in the UK is downloaded legally," he said. "The British government's view is that taking people's work without due payment is wrong and that, as an economy based on creativity, we cannot sit back and do nothing as this happens."

Web Marketer Ordered To Pay Facebook $711 Million Damages

Facebook said Thursday a California court has awarded the social networking Web site $711 million in damages in an anti-spam case against Internet marketer Sanford Wallace.

Facebook sued Wallace for accessing users' accounts without their permission and sending phony posts and messages. The company said on its blog that in addition to the damage award, the San Jose, Calif., court referred Wallace to the U.S. Attorney's office for prosecution for criminal contempt of court - meaning he could face jail time.

Wallace earned the monikers "Spam King" and "Spamford" as head of a company that sent as many as 30 million junk e-mails a day in the 1990s.

In May 2008, the online hangout MySpace won a $230 million judgment over junk messages sent to its members when a federal judge in Los Angeles ruled against Wallace and his partner, Walter Rines, in another case brought under the federal anti-spam law known as CAN-SPAM. In 2006, Wallace was fined $4 million after the Federal Trade Commission accused him of running an operation that infected computers with software that caused flurries of pop-up ads, known as "spyware."

"While we don't expect to receive the vast majority of the award, we hope that this will act as a continued deterrent against these criminals," said Sam O'Rourke, associate general counsel for Facebook, in a blog posting Thursday. "This is another important victory in our fight against spam."

There was no phone number listed for Wallace in Las Vegas, where he is believed to be living, according to the ruling.

The company said the judgment marks the second-largest anti-spam award ever. In November 2008, Facebook won an $873 million judgment against Adam Guerbuez and his business, Atlantis Blue Capital, who bombarded users with sexually explicit spam messages.

Yahoo Shuts Down GeoCities

Yahoo on Monday closed GeoCities, a free Web hosting service that it purchased for over three billion dollars at the height of the dot-com boom.

"We have enjoyed hosting websites created by Yahoo users all over the world, and we're proud of the community you've built," the California-based Internet pioneer said in a message at the GeoCities website.

"However, we have decided to focus on helping our customers explore and build relationships online in other ways."

Yahoo said GeoCities would not be available after Monday and recommended GeoCities refugees set up new online homes at its paid Web hosting service, with an introductory offer of just five dollars for the first 12 months.

The closure of GeoCities comes a week after Yahoo reported that aggressive cost-cutting helped it more than triple its net profit despite a 12-percent decline in revenue in its third quarter.

Yahoo said net profit soared more than 244 percent in the quarter to 186 million dollars, or 13 cents per share, from 54 million dollars, or four cents per share, a year ago, easily surpassing analysts' forecasts.

The better-than-expected performance was due in large part to cost-cutting measures implemented by Carol Bartz since being named in January to replace Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang as chief executive.

Yahoo has reduced its headcount by some 2,000 during the past year and presently has some 13,200 employees.

Yahoo announced the planned closure of GeoCities early this year, saying it was "increasing investment in some areas while scaling back in others."

GeoCities was founded in 1994 as Beverly Hills Internet and bought by Yahoo during the infamous dot-com boom in Silicon Valley.

GeoCities provided people with tools to build interactive websites and eventually added chat forums and other community-oriented features.

Yahoo eventually added fee-paying premium services in an effort to make money at GeoCities, which had trouble retaining users and getting profitable.

Internet Turns 40 with Birthday Bash

Technology and media stars, pundits and entrepreneurs joined the Internet's father to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his culture-changing child.

"It's the 40th year since the infant Internet first spoke," said University of California, Los Angeles, professor Leonard Kleinrock, who headed the team that first linked computers online in 1969.

Kleinrock led an anniversary event at the UCLA campus that blended

reminiscence of the Internet’s past with debate about its future.

"There is going to be an ongoing controversy about where we have been and where we are going," said Arianna Huffington, co-founder of the popular news and blog website that bears her name.

"It is not just about the Internet; it is about our times. We are going to need desperately to tap into the better angels of our nature and make our lives not just about ourselves but about our communities and our world."

Huffington was on hand to discuss the power the Internet gives to grass roots organizers on a panel with Kleinrock and Social Brain Foundation director Isaac Mao.

"The Internet is a democratizing element; everyone has an equivalent voice," Kleinrock said. "There is no way back at this point. We can’t turn it off. The Internet Age is here."

Kleinrock never imagined Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube that day four decades ago when his team gave birth to what is now taken for granted as the Internet.

"The net is penetrating every aspect of our lives," Kleinrock said to a room of about 200 people and an equal number watching online.

On October 29, 1969, Kleinrock led a team that got a computer at UCLA to "talk" to one at a research institute.

Kleinrock was driven by a certainty that computers were destined to speak to each other and that the resulting network should be as simple to use as telephones.

US telecom colossus AT&T ran lines connecting the computers for ARPANET, a project backed with money from a research arm of the US military’s Advanced Research Projects Agency.

ARPANET grew into what is known today as the Internet.

"It feels to me like the alumni meeting of the framers of the US Constitution," Electronic Frontier Foundation co-founder John Perry Barlow said as he addressed the gathering.

"There are a lot of people in this room who are honest to god uncles and aunts of the Internet. What you did is conceivably the most important technological event since the capture of fire."

Barlow, whose nonprofit legal organization fights for online freedom, maintained that Internet access is on the verge of becoming an inalienable human right.

"The reality today is that the Internet is like a new life; it is organic," said Regina Dugan, director of what became DARPA when "Defense" was added to the agency’s name.

"It is inherently beautiful. It challenges us all to think about ourselves, about others, about ethics, and about the future."

To test the power of the Internet, DARPA will release 10 "very large balloons" in the continental US and then pay 40,000 dollars to the first person or team to pinpoint their locations using online tools or

networking.

The balloons will be afloat for two days and visible only during daylight hours.

"Individuals can make information go viral," Dugan said. "Then it was an Internet challenge, today it is a network challenge."

The competition will be tracked on wildly popular microblogging service Twitter, according to DARPA.

Kleinrock, who is now 75, sees the Internet spreading into everything.

"The next step is to move it into the real world," Kleinrock said. "The Internet will be present everywhere. I will walk into a room and it will know I am there. It will talk back to me."

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